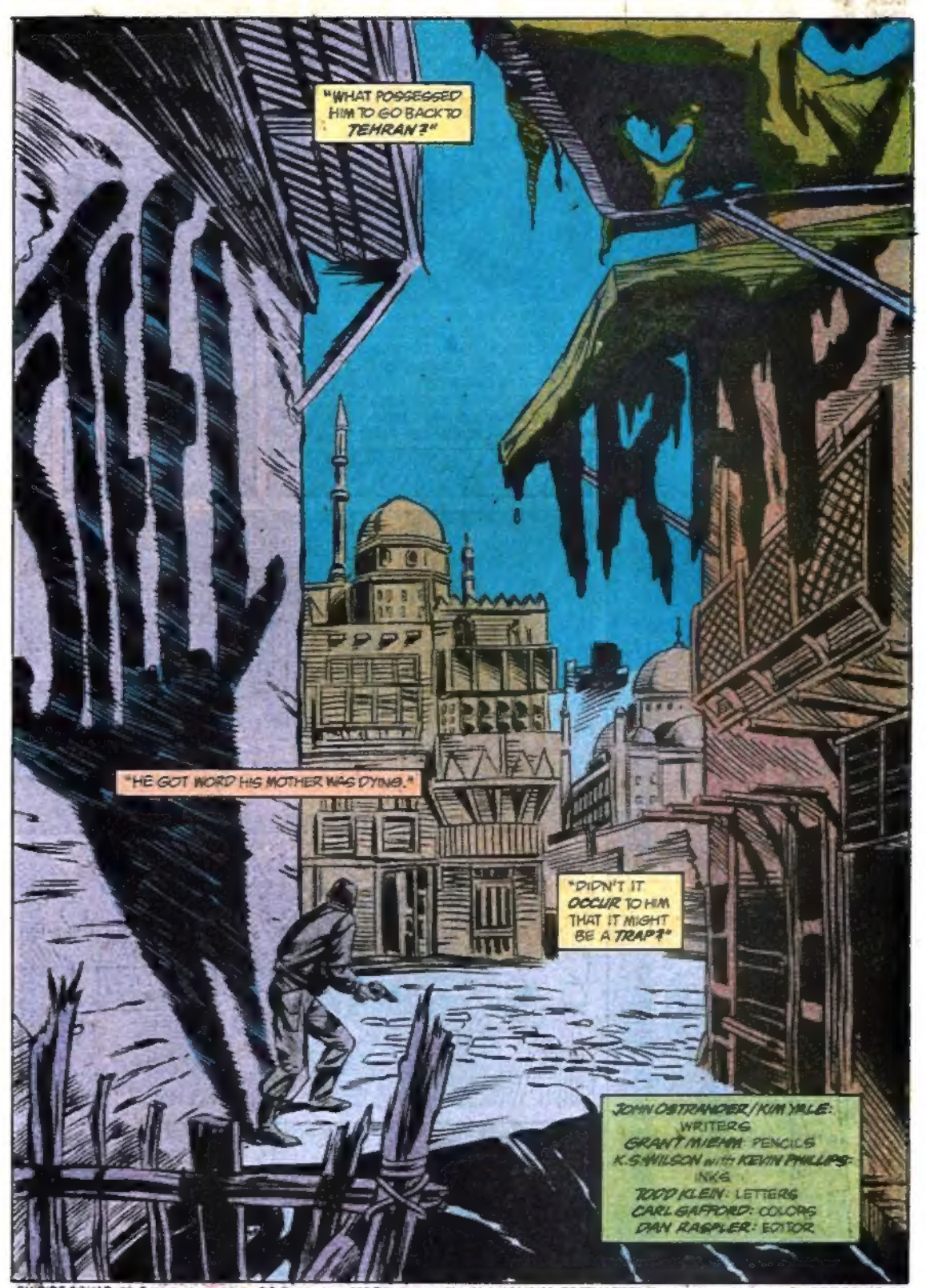
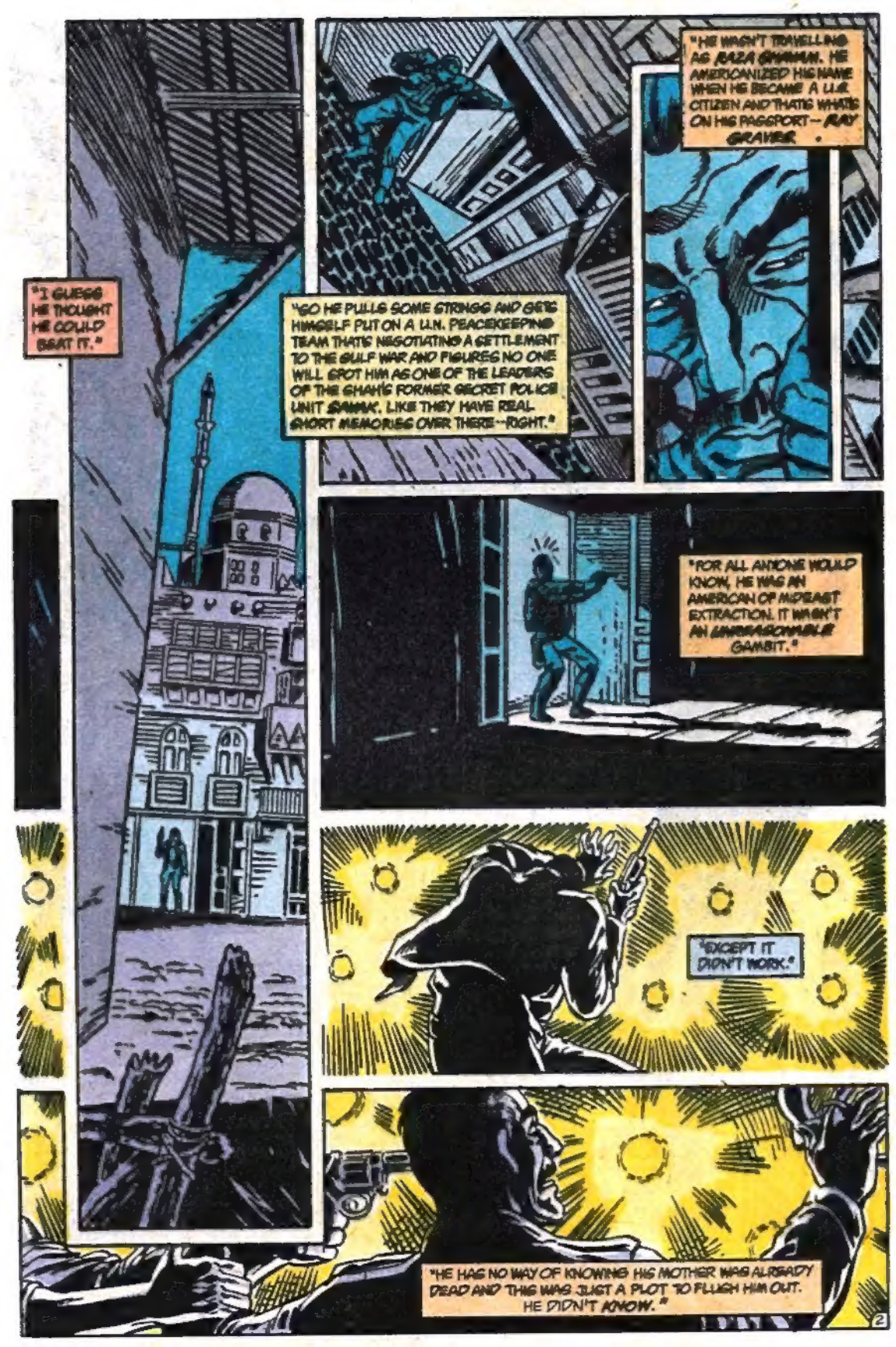
OSTRANDER·YALE·MIEHM·WILSON
SUICIDE SQUAD™
32
US $1.00
CAN $1.25
UK 50p
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
SS™



SUICIDE SQUAD 32 Published monthly by DC Comics Inc., 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SUICIDE SQUAD, DC Comics Subscriptions, P.O. Box 0528, Baldwin, NY 11510. Annual subscription rate $12.00, Canada $17.00, all other foreign $24.00. U.S. funds only. Copyright © 1989 DC Comics Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. All characters featured in this issue and distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of DC Comics Inc. Advertising Representative: Print Advertising Representatives, 355 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017 (212) 391-1400. Printed in U.S.A.
DC Comics Inc. A Warner Communications Company

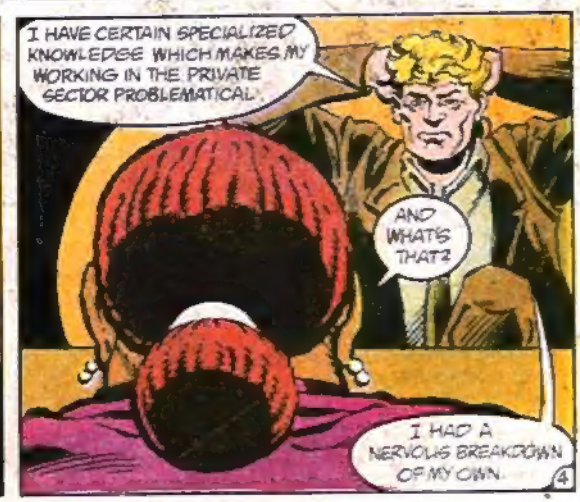
G-5072


"I GUESS HE THOUGHT HE COULD BEAT IT."
"SO HE PULLS SOME STRINGS AND GETS HIMSELF PUT ON A U.N. PEACEKEEPING TEAM THAT'S NEGOTIATING A SETTLEMENT TO THE GULF WAR AND FIGURES NO ONE WILL SPOT HIM AS ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THE SHAH'S FORMER SECRET POLICE UNIT SAVAK. LIKE THEY HAVE REAL SHORT MEMORIES OVER THERE--RIGHT."
"HE WASN'T TRAVELLING AS RAZA SHAHAN. HE AMERICANIZED HIS NAME WHEN HE BECAME A U.S. CITIZEN AND THAT'S WHAT'S ON HIS PASSPORT -- RAY GRAVES.
"FOR ALL ANYONE WOULD KNOW, HE WAS AN AMERICAN OF MIDEAST EXTRACTION. IT WASN'T AN UNREASONABLE GAMBIT."
"EXCEPT IT DIDN'T WORK."
"HE HAS NO WAY OF KNOWING HIS MOTHER WAS ALREADY DEAD AND THIS WAS JUST A PLOT TO FLUSH HIM OUT. HE DIDN'T KNOW."
2

SO HE GETS HIMSELF ARRESTED. THEY'VE ALREADY TRIED HIM IN ABSENTIA AND CONDEMNED HIM TO DEATH.
I WISH TO HELL THEY'D JUST LINED HIM UP AND SHOT HIM WHEN THEY CAUGHT HIM. THEN WE WOULDN'T HAVE THIS DAMNED INTERNATIONAL SITUATION KICKING US IN THE BEJEEZUS.
THE ARREST ALONE WAS A GROSS VIOLATION OF STANDARD INTERNATIONAL RIGHTS! HE WAS TRAVELLING UNDER A DIPLOMATIC VISA! DEPORT HIM--YES. ARREST--UH UH! ESPECIALLY AFTER THE STUNT THEY PULLED WITH THE JOKER!
THE POINT IS THAT SHAVAM IS NOW AN AMERICAN CITIZEN AND THE PRESIDENT HAS DECIDED WE'RE NOT GOING TO LET THE IRANIANS JUST EXECUTE HIM.
THAT POINT IS MOOT, GENTLEMEN.
I ASKED YOUR OPINION AS TO WHICH GOVERNMENTAL METAHUMAN AGENCY GETS SENT IN. THE JUSTICE LEAGUE IS OUT-- A STRIKE WOULD BE A VIOLATION OF THEIR U.N. CHARTER.
SEND IN MAJOR FORCE-- YOU WANT A STRONG U.S. PRESENCE TO MAKE A STATEMENT TO IRAN AND THE WORLD.
A STRONG PRESENCE WILL PROVOKE A STRONG RESPONSE. I SAY YOU HAVE TO GO THE COVERT ROUTE--
--SEND IN CHECKMATE AND LET THEM SPIRIT THE GUY AWAY BEFORE THE IRANIANS KNOW WHAT'S WHAT.
SO I'M SENDING IN THE SUICIDE SQUAD.
THE PRESIDENT IS WITH YOU, COLONEL STONEMAN. HE WANTS A STRONG U.S. PRESENCE. BUT I ALSO AGREE WITH MR. GRISWOLD HERE--A MILITARY RESPONSE, WHILE PERHAPS SUCCESSFUL, WOULD PROBABLY CREATE A POTENTIALLY MORE DANGEROUS SITUATION.
LET'S SEE IF WE CAN COME UP WITH AN IDEA ON HOW TO GET THEM OUT AGAIN.

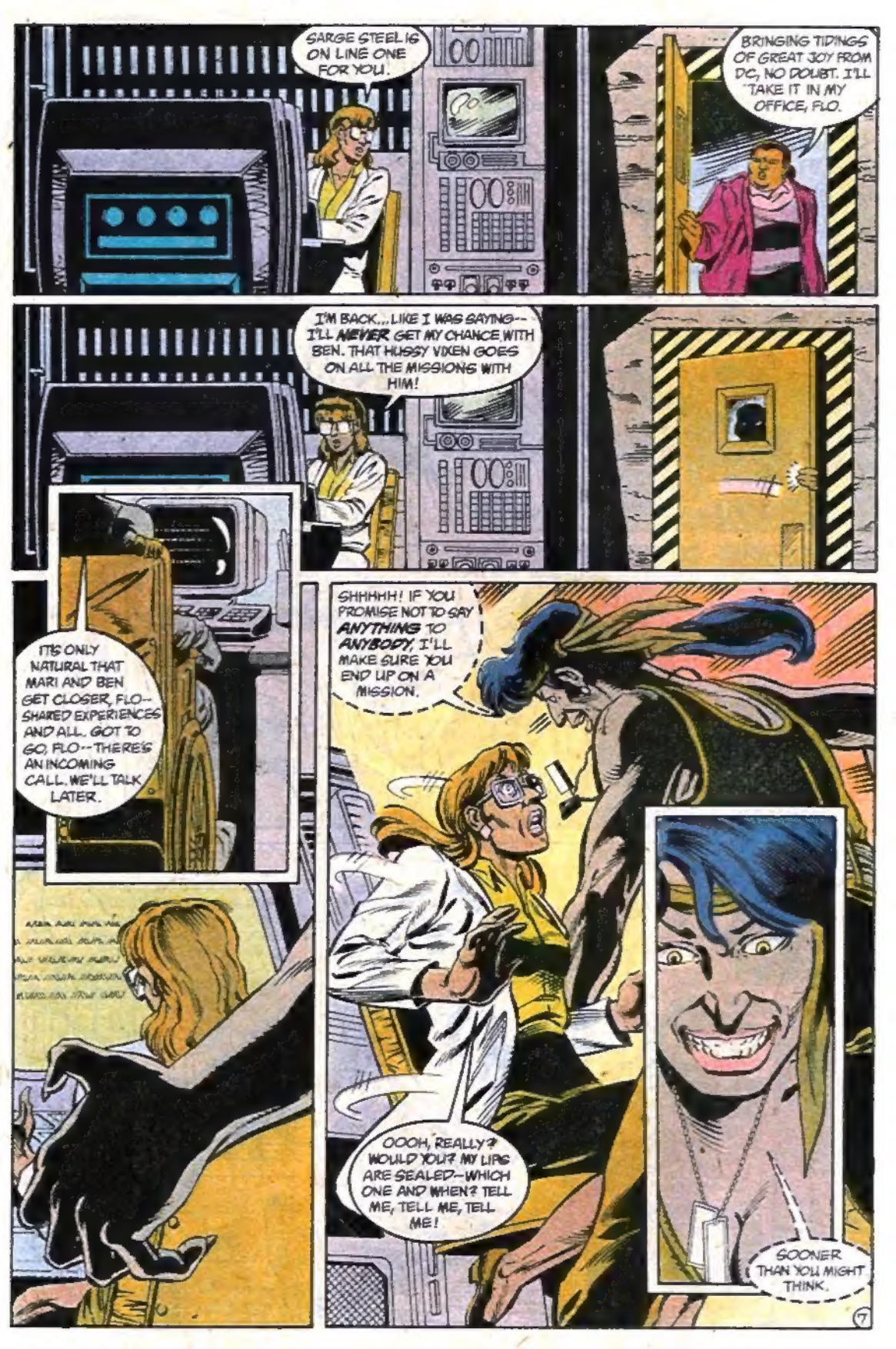
...AND I SAYS TO MYSELF, "SELF, THAT'S JACK KOVACKS. THEY ARE CALLING HIM KALE, BUT I KNOW HE'S MY OLD BUDDY, JACK." AND I WONDER WHY HE'S CALLING HIMSELF KALE.
SO EVENTUALLY I CALL HIM UP AND ASK HIM WHY.
TENTRY II
WHAT EXACTLY IS IT YOU WANT, MR. McCOY?
DOCTOR McCOY, ACTUALLY. AND—NO, DON'T BEAM ME UP.
JACK SAYS YOU NEED A NEW HEAD SHRINK WHICH, BY STRANGE COINCIDENCE, IS WHAT I HAPPEN TO BE.

MAC'S ACTUALLY VERY GOOD, MRS. WALLER...
UH-HUH. THAT'S WHY HE'S TRYING TO BLACKMAIL HIS WAY INTO A GOVERNMENT JOB RATHER THAN MAKING REAL MONEY IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

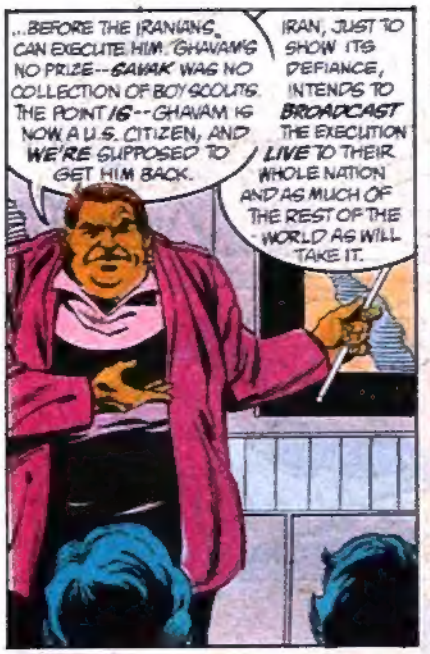

I HAVE CERTAIN SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE WHICH MAKES MY WORKING IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR PROBLEMATICAL.
AND WHAT'S THAT?
I HAD A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN OF MY OWN.

YOU'VE DONE A PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW WITH THE MAN, FATHER. WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?
HIRE HIM. FIRST OFF--I DON'T THINK YOU REALLY HAVE MUCH CHOICE. SECONDLY--HE KNOWS HIS STUFF.
CHOICE? I ALWAYS GOT A CHOICE.
WHAT IF I DECIDED JUST TO HAVE YOU KILLED, DOCTOR?
THEN, AS MY FIRST OFFICIAL ACT IN MY NEW JOB, I'D HAVE YOU COMMITTED TO AN ASYLUM.
BECAUSE THAT ATTITUDE, MRS. WALLER, IS JUST PLAIN NUTS.
ONE OTHER THING, MRS. WALLER--IF I SAY SOMEONE ISN'T FIT TO GO ON A MISSION, THEY DON'T GO. YOU SEND THEM ANYWAY AND I'M GONE AND I'LL GO NOISY.
ANYTHING ELSE?
YEAH--I DON'T DO WINDOWS.

JOB'S YOURS. KOVACKS WILL SHOW YOU YOUR NEW OFFICE.
FATHER, CAN I SEE YOU A MOMENT?
SOMEBODY TOLD McCOY TO MAKE THAT LAST DEMAND AND IT WASN'T KOVACKS; HE WASN'T HERE DURING THE FLAG-DEADSHOT FIASCO.
SO I FIGURE IT WAS YOU. MIND TELLING ME WHY?
I REMEMBER A CONVERSATION WHERE I POINTED OUT THAT YOU LIKE SURROUNDING YOURSELF WITH PEOPLE WHO WILL ACT AS YOUR BRAKES, HELP KEEP YOU IN CHECK. MAC WILL DO THAT FOR YOU WITH THE SQUAD.
YOU REALIZE YOU CAPITULATED TO MAC? IF YOU REALLY HAD NO INTENTIONS OF HIRING HIM, YOU'D HAVE FOUND THE EXCUSE. STOP ME IF I'M WRONG--OR FIRE ME AND McCOY.
RIGHT NOW.
'SCUSE ME, FATHER-- I GOT SOME WORK TO DO.
6


SARGE STEEL IS ON LINE ONE FOR YOU.
BRINGING TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY FROM DC, NO DOUBT. I'LL TAKE IT IN MY OFFICE, FLO.
I'M BACK... LIKE I WAS SAYING-- I'LL NEVER GET MY CHANCE WITH BEN. THAT HUSSY VIXEN GOES ON ALL THE MISSIONS WITH HIM!
IT'S ONLY NATURAL THAT MARI AND BEN GET CLOSER, FLO-- SHARED EXPERIENCES AND ALL. GOT TO GO, FLO-- THERE'S AN INCOMING CALL. WE'LL TALK LATER.
SHHHHH! IF YOU PROMISE NOT TO SAY ANYTHING TO ANYBODY, I'LL MAKE SURE YOU END UP ON A MISSION.
OOOH, REALLY? WOULD YOU? MY LIPS ARE SEALED--WHICH ONE AND WHEN? TELL ME, TELL ME, TELL ME!
SOONER THAN YOU MIGHT THINK.
7

FLO, GET BRONZE TIGER, VIXEN, MAJOR VICTORY, SHADE, BRISCOE, COUNT VERTIGO, CAPTAIN BOOMERANG, AND RAVAN TOGETHER IN THE MISSIONS ROOM -- THEY GOT A PRIORITY MISSION.
YOU WANT TO TALK TO ME, DO IT ON THE WAY OVER. YOU'RE GOING ON THIS MISSION, TOO.
NO. I NEED TO -- HOW DOES THE EXPRESSION GO? -- TAKE CARE OF SOME BUSINESS.
LISTEN, MISS HIGH AND MIGHTY! DIDN'T YOU JUST HEAR ME SAY THERE'S A PRIORITY MISSION? YOU THINK JUST BY SAYING "NO" YOU'RE EXEMPT FROM THIS EXCURSION?
LIKE TO SEE YOU COME AND TRY AND MAKE ME GO. I'M NOT A PRISONER HERE, AND I WON'T ACT LIKE ONE.
I'M TURNING INTO A SOFT TOUCH IN MY OLD AGE -- PEOPLE KEEP TAKING ADVANTAGE OF ME.
SO WHERE'S HIS ROYAL DEPRESSIVENESS?
DR. McCOY SAID THAT COUNT VERTIGO WAS IN THE DEPRESSIVE CYCLE OF HIS MANIC/DEPRESSIVE STATE AND NOT FIT FOR DUTY. HE SAID, "IF AMANDA THINKS I WAS KIDDING THIS MORNING, SHE CAN PUSH IT." END OF QUOTE.
HUH. I'LL DEAL WITH HIM LATER.


...BEFORE THE IRANIANS CAN EXECUTE HIM. GHAVAM'S NO PRIZE--SAVAK WAS NO COLLECTION OF BOY SCOUTS. THE POINT IS--GHAVAM IS NOW A U.S. CITIZEN, AND WE'RE SUPPOSED TO GET HIM BACK.
IRAN, JUST TO SHOW ITS DEFIANCE, INTENDS TO BROADCAST THE EXECUTION LIVE TO THEIR WHOLE NATION AND AS MUCH OF THE REST OF THE WORLD AS WILL TAKE IT.

KNOWING THE MEDIA--I'D BET A MASSIVE WORLD-WIDE AUDIENCE.

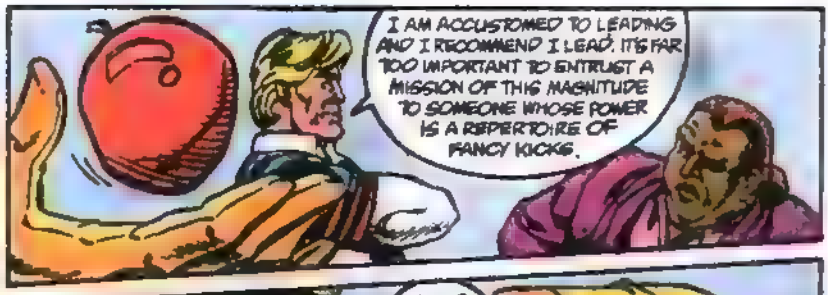
AFTER YOU GRAB GHAVAM, YOU'LL HIGHTAIL IT HERE. THIS IS A SALT DESERT CALLED DASHT-I-KAVIR, JUST BELOW A TOWN CALLED GARMSAR.
Caspian Sea
Mashhad
Tehran
IRAN
Abadan
Kermán
Persian Gulf
A U.S. CARGO PLANE WILL RENDEZVOUS WITH YOU THERE AND TAKE YOU, UNDER FIGHTER ESCORT, TO OUR CARRIERS IN THE PERSIAN GULF.

PLEASE--A QUESTION. WOULD YOU LIKE US ALSO TO KILL WHOEVER IS RUNNING IRAN THIS WEEK WHILE WE'RE AT IT?
NOT TO WORRY. ONLY LITTLE MORE EFFORT REQUIRED. THROW COUNTRY IN TURMOIL. EASY PICKINGS.

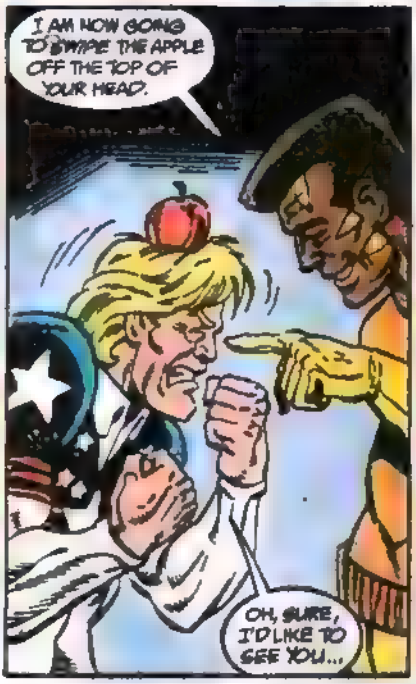
I LIKE THE WAY YOU THINK, RAVAN, BUT... NO. THIS'LL CREATE ENOUGH FUROR WITH THE ISLAMIC STATES AS IT IS.

WE DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY'RE HOLDING GHAVAM. SO WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO SNATCH HIM DURING THE EXECUTION.
MEANS ALL WE GET IS ONE SHOT. DON'T MAKE IT A BLANK.

I WANT TO KNOW WHO'S LEADING THIS MISSION.
BRONZE TIGER IS MISSIONS LEADER.


I AM ACCUSTOMED TO LEADING AND I RECOMMEND I LEAD. IT'S FAR TOO IMPORTANT TO ENTRUST A MISSION OF THIS MAGNITUDE TO SOMEONE WHOSE POWER IS A REPERTOIRE OF FANCY KICKS.

HOLD STILL A MOMENT!
WHAT ARE YOU PLAYING AT?


I AM NOW GOING TO SWIPE THE APPLE OFF THE TOP OF YOUR HEAD.
OH, SURE, I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU...

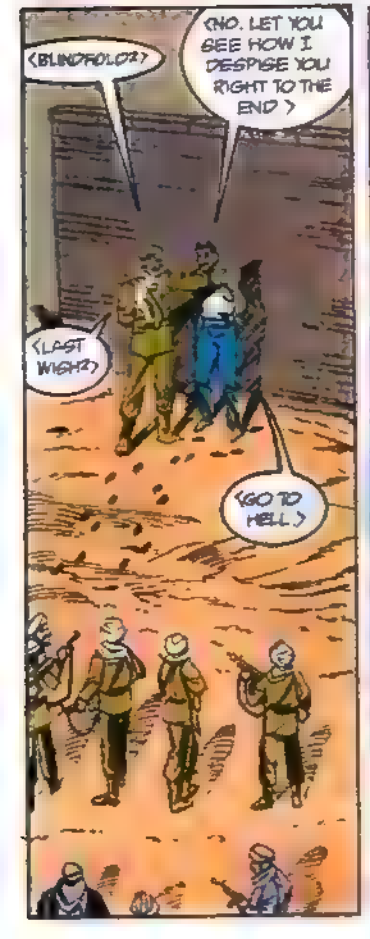
...TRY...!

NEXT TIME, IT'LL BE YOUR NOSE.
I'M MISSION COMMANDER, MAJOR VICTORY. END OF DISCUSSION.

EVERYBODY GET OVER TO YAEGER ON THE DOUBLE. YOU'LL BE BRIEFED EN ROUTE. BRISCOE, MAKE SURE SHEBA'S SHIPSHAPE. TIMING'S CRUCIAL HERE. A SECOND EITHER WAY AND THE WHOLE WORLD GETS US SCREW UP. SO DON'T SCREW UP.
IT'S THE WALL'S IDEA TO STICK ME ON THIS YARRA MISSION, ENNIT? CAN'T GIVE IT A REST, CAN SHE? WHAT ABOUT THOSE BLOODY -PROBS WHO STAYED BEHIND?
PUNCH AND JEWELEE DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT POWERS FOR THIS MISSION. AS FOR DR. LIGHT...WELL, LIGHT IS AN IDIOT.
YOU'RE A JERK, DIGGER, BUT YOU'RE AN EFFECTIVE JERK IN COMBAT.
BEN, THIS MISSION BOTHERS ME. GHAVAM BELONGED TO SAMMAK, AND TORTURE AND MURDER WERE THE TOOLS OF HIS TRADE. I FEEL LIKE WE'VE BEEN SENT TO RESCUE A NAZI WAR CRIMINAL.
THERE'S ANOTHER SIDE TO THE COIN, MARI -- DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY. GHAVAM SHOULD HAVE BEEN PROTECTED BY IT. THE IRANIANS HAVE VIOLATED THE BASIC TENET OF DIPLOMACY TODAY.
I SEE IRAN'S ACT AS BARBARIC, ONE THAT COULD SINK THE ABILITY OF NATIONS TO DEAL WITH ONE ANOTHER AND NEGOTIATE.
I'VE GOT NO TROUBLE WITH SAVING GHAVAM. NOT ONE BIT.
11

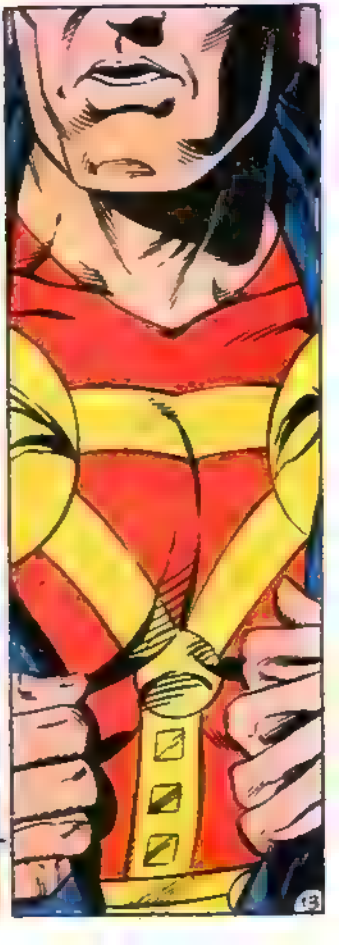
SOMETIME LATER, IN A CELL IN TEHRAN...
<IT IS TIME, COLONEL GHAVAM.>
<IT WAS A WELL-PLANNED TRAP, MUJHARDI. YOU ALWAYS WERE AN OPPORTUNISTIC SWINE -- EVEN WHEN YOU WERE MY AIDE. HOW IS IT YOU WEREN'T CONDEMNED ALONG WITH ME?>
<BY GIVING THEM WHAT THEY NEEDED TO CONVICT YOU!>
<BESIDES, COLONEL -- I GOT RELIGION.>
12

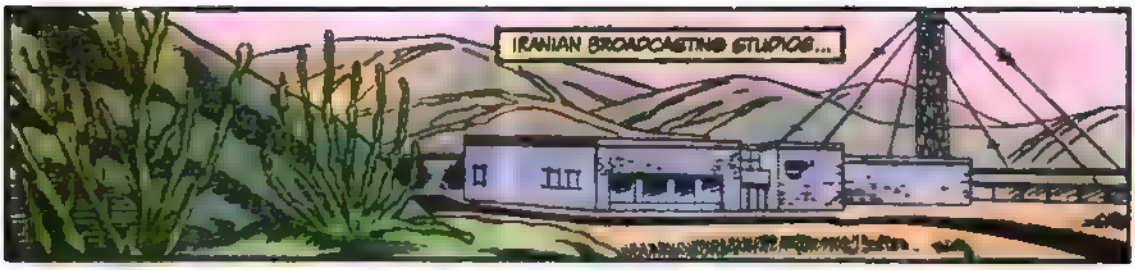
I DON'T LIKE GETTING DRESSED UP IN DRAG, EVEN IF IT'S IRANIAN DRAG!
AND THESE THINGS SMELL!
THAT'S WHAT I LIKE ABOUT WORKING WITH YOU, BOOMERANG - YOUR FORTITUDE.

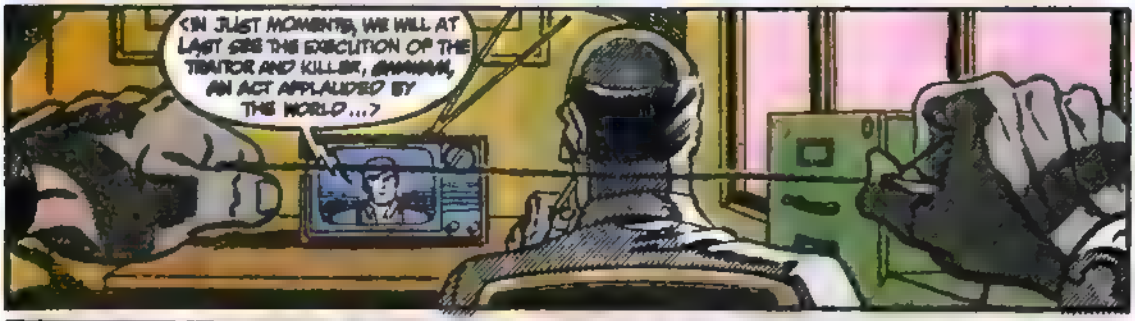

(BLINDFOLD?)
(NO. LET YOU SEE HOW I DESPISE YOU RIGHT TO THE END.)
(LAST WISH?)
(GO TO HELL.)

(WE'LL BEGIN, THEN.)

I THINK THIS IS THE LONG WAY AROUND TO MEDA

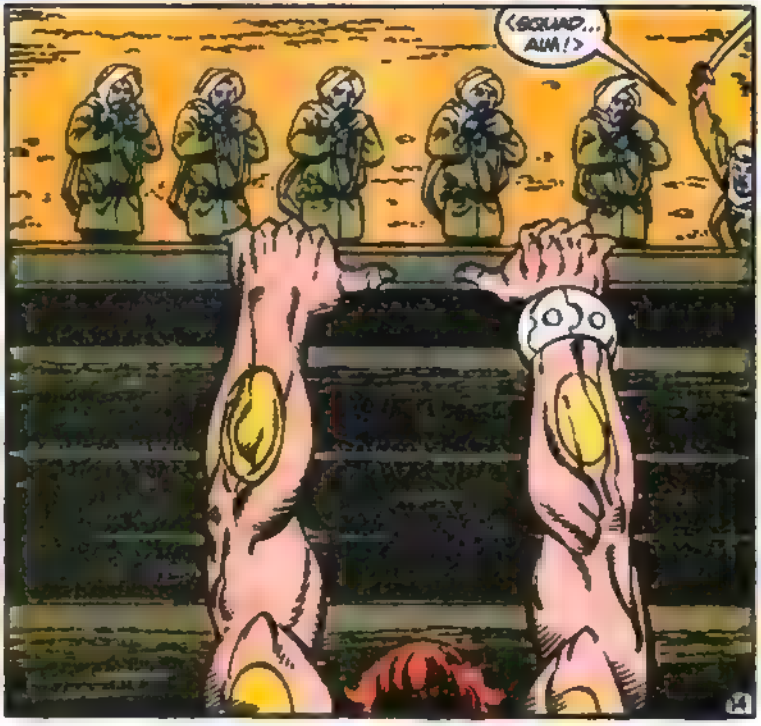



IRANIAN BROADCASTING STUDIOS...


<IN JUST MOMENTS, WE WILL AT LAST SEE THE EXECUTION OF THE TRAITOR AND KILLER, [illegible], AN ACT APPLAUDED BY THE WORLD...>

<HELLO. YOU CAN BE UNDERSTANDING ME, YES? YOU ARE STATION MANAGER, YES?>
<...YES...YES...!>
<GOOD. NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENING NEXT, YOU WILL CONTINUE TO BROADCAST IT, UNDERSTAND? NO MATTER WHAT.>
<... YES...!>

<SQUAD... READY!>


<SQUAD... AIM!>

(FIRE!)
BLAM!
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
WE'RE HERE TO RESCUE YOU, COLONEL. KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN AND YOUR EYES CLOSED. I DON'T WANT THE DISTORTION EFFECT WORKING ON YOU.
WHATEVER THEY FEAR MOST— THAT'S WHAT THEY'RE GOING TO GET.
KRAK!
HUH!!
WHAM!
ALL UNITS -- VORO IS SECURED!
GO, GO, GO!
VOOOP

SHWUP!
SHWUP!
WEEIIIMM
SHEBA HOP HOP LAY DOWN TRACKS AUTOMATIC LOCK 'N' LOAD, CLEAN 'N' SWEEP, ROCK 'N ROLL
BRADDA BRADDA BRADDA
SHWUP!
THAT'S DADDY'S GIRL!
AAHGG!
BRADDA
BRADDA
BRADDA
YOU KNOW YOUR TARGETS! LET'S HIT THEM!
WE KNOW OUR TARGETS JUST TAKE CARE OF YOUR OWN!
ALL RIGHT, YOU MURDERING SCUM!
YOUR BUZZARDS HAVE COME HOME TO ROOST!
YOU HAVE BEEN TOYING TOO LONG WITH THE MIGHTIEST NATION ON EARTH!
HERE'S WHERE YOU GET YOURS -COURTESY OF MAJOR VICTORY!!!
16

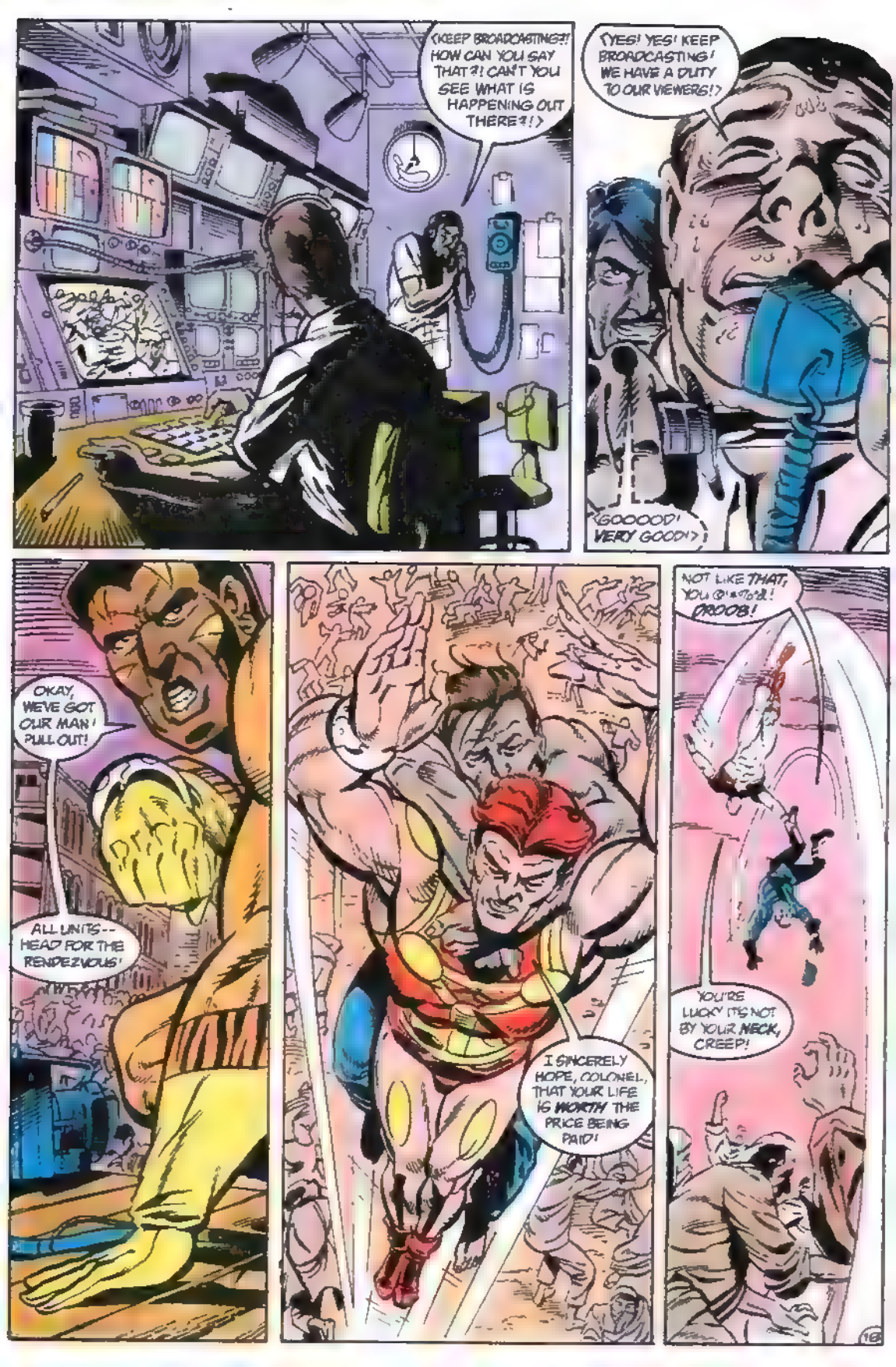
WOULD SOMEBODY PLEASE STUFF A SOCK IN MAJOR CLACHE OVER THERE?!

I... UHNNN... MAY NOT BE AS HONEY... UHN!... AS MOTORMOUTH OVER THERE, BOYS, BUT I... AHH!... GET THE JOB DONE!
KRASH!

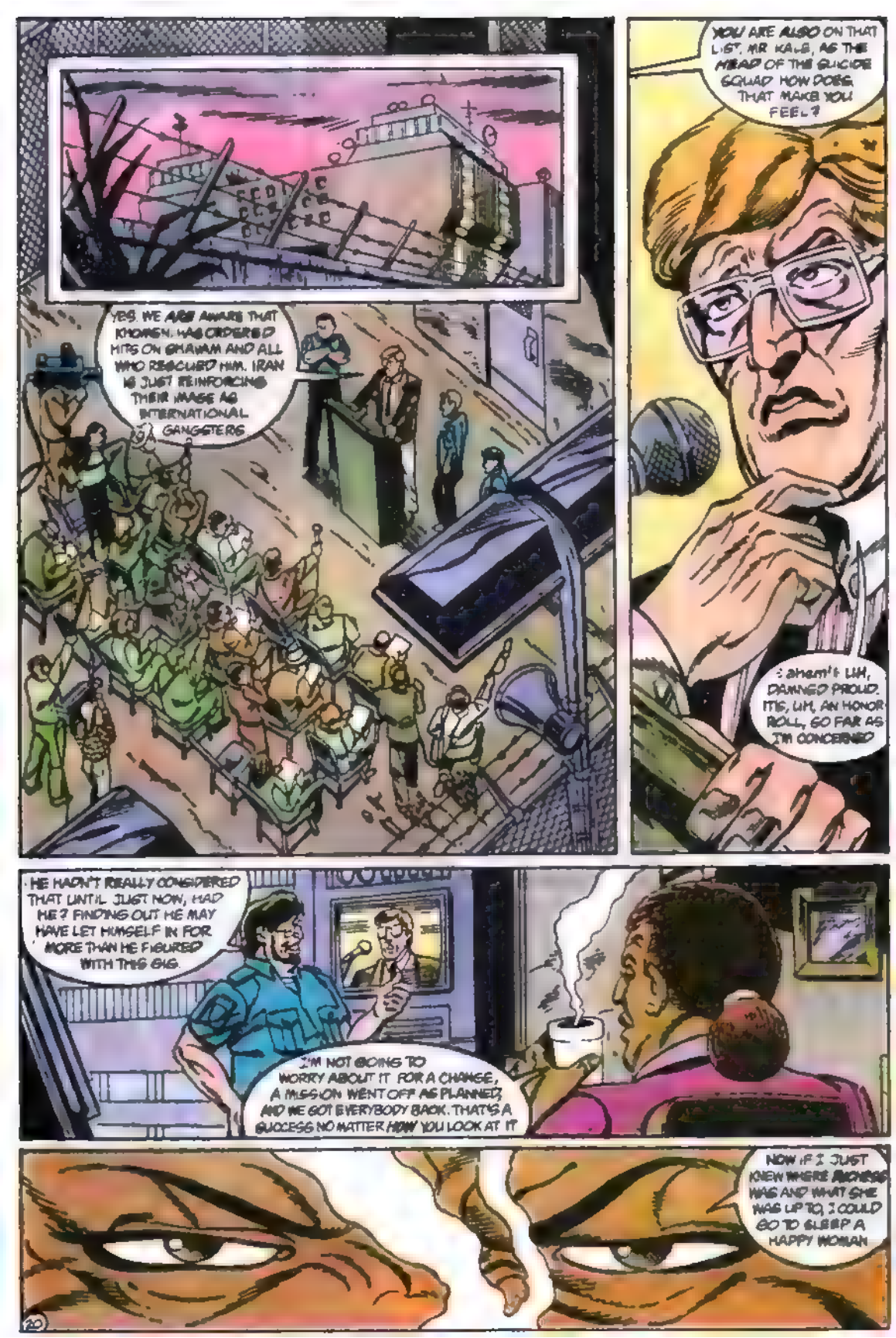
AH-AH! TRYING TO GET A BEAD ON ME, EH? THE AYATOLLAH BOOMERANG SENTENCES YOU TO DEATH!
BA-BOOM!

YOU! YER UGLY! THE AYATOLLAH BOOMERANG SAYS ORF WITH YER HEAD!
BA-BOOM!
AND YER TOO UGLY TO LIVE! THE AYATOLLAH BOOMERANG SENTENCES YOU TO HAVE YER HAND CUT OFF!

LOR' HELP ME, I THINK I'M STARTIN' T'UNDERSTAND KHOMENI!
THIS IS FUN!


(KEEP BROADCASTING?! HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?! CAN'T YOU SEE WHAT IS HAPPENING OUT THERE?!)
(YES! YES! KEEP BROADCASTING! WE HAVE A DUTY TO OUR VIEWERS!)
(GOOOOD! VERY GOOD!)
OKAY, WE'VE GOT OUR MAN! PULL OUT!
ALL UNITS-- HEAD FOR THE RENDEZVOUS!
I SINCERELY HOPE, COLONEL, THAT YOUR LIFE IS WORTH THE PRICE BEING PAID!
NOT LIKE THAT, YOU @!*%@!! OROOB!
YOU'RE LUCKY IT'S NOT BY YOUR NECK, CREEP!
16

NEED A LIFT?
MMM. GIVE ME A LIFT IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE, PRETTY LADY!
TIGER TO RAVAN! WE'RE ON OUR WAY! E.T.A.-- TWO MINUTES! BE READY!
SHEBA! FOUR NINER FOUR PEEL
<I MUST BE GOING NOW>
<GOOD BYE>
THUNK!
<I DID YOU A FAVOR FOR ALLOWING THIS TO BE BROADCAST, YOU WOULD HAVE DIED A HORRIBLE DEATH>
THESE PEOPLE--THEY'RE BARBARIANS!


YES. WE ARE AWARE THAT KHOMEIN HAS ORDERED HITS ON GHAVAM AND ALL WHO RESCUED HIM. IRAN IS JUST REINFORCING THEIR IMAGE AS INTERNATIONAL GANGSTERS.
YOU ARE ALSO ON THAT LIST, MR. KALB, AS THE HEAD OF THE SUICIDE SQUAD. HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL?
I aren't UH, DAMNED PROUD. IT'S, UH, AN HONOR ROLL, SO FAR AS I'M CONCERNED.
HE HADN'T REALLY CONSIDERED THAT UNTIL JUST NOW, HAD HE? FINDING OUT HE MAY HAVE LET HIMSELF IN FOR MORE THAN HE FIGURED WITH THIS GIG.
I'M NOT GOING TO WORRY ABOUT IT FOR A CHANGE. A MISSION WENT OFF AS PLANNED, AND WE GOT EVERYBODY BACK. THAT'S A SUCCESS NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT.
NOW IF I JUST KNEW WHERE ANDRESS WAS AND WHAT SHE WAS UP TO, I COULD GO TO SLEEP A HAPPY WOMAN.

BAILEY, NEW HAMPSHIRE.
I'M GLAD SCOTT AND OBERON ARE GONE FOR THE DAY ON JLA BUSINESS. I CAN FINALLY INVESTIGATE THIS INSIDIOUS WAXY YELLOW BUILD-UP THAT IS SAID TO LURK IN THE KITCHEN.
Knock!
CAN'T YOU TWO REMEMBER TO TAKE YOUR HOUSE KEYS WITH YOU?
OOOOOO
BY THE SOURCEEEEEEEAAAHHH!
UGGHH!
KRACK!

NEXT: BACK TO APOKOLIPS!

SUICIDE NOTES

DC COMICS INC.
666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103

JENETTE KAHN President and Publisher
DICK GIORDANO V.P.-Executive Editor
ROBERT GREENBERGER Editor
RICHARD BRUNING Art Director
TERRI CUNNINGHAM Mgr.-Editorial Admin.
PAT BASTIENNE Mgr.-Editorial Coordinator
BOB ROZAKIS Production Director
PAUL LEVITZ Executive V.P.
JOE ORLANDO V.P.-Creative Director
BRUCE BRISTOW V.P.-Sales & Marketing
MATT BAGONE Circulation Director
PAT CALDON Controller

L-3789

Dear John and Company,

Now I know what the old saying "Be careful what you ask for, you just might get it," means. While I was one of the many who felt that the "Suicide" had been lacking as of late from SUICIDE SQUAD, I almost regret those feelings now. Point in case being issue #26, "Stone ,Cold Dead."

Don't get me wrong. Although Rick Flag was my favorite character of the book (self sacrificing loyalty in a person has always been a value that I'm a pushover for) the move was a brilliant one. If the readers really want a book where they cannot be complacent about "knowing" that the protagonists are going to emerge alive and victorious in every instance, they can't just expect second-raters to eat it. To really get a person's blood pumping you have to be made to *believe* that your favorite characters are in dire peril, *each and every issue!* Nothing could have accomplished that better than the elimination of the very character who formed the cornerstone of the 40-year history of the Squad given to us in SECRET ORIGINS.

This ending is one that I've been expecting since Tolliver's demise (and in a very real sense you seemed to have been setting poor Flag up for it since the origin story). Given Flag's strength of morals and obsession with paying a debt, it was inevitable that he could no longer live with himself after the Tolliver incident. The manner in which this was resolved could not have been more appropriate, or more tragic. The action and espionage of the story was given a truly emotional impact by watching Eve read Rick's final words. The interweaving of a tale of the original Squad was the icing on top of a very bittersweet cake.

The other plotlines are beginning to come together, making SUICIDE SQUAD a roller coaster ride each issue. Although Grant Miehm was only filling in for these two issues, his art is right in line with the standards set by McDonnell. The big difference is the splashy use of colors and the slightly more cartoonish view of the characters. Combined with the pace of the comic, SQUAD is no longer just gritty and suspenseful, it's also a total blast. (Could Oracle be the newly paralyzed Barbara Gordon, a.k.a. Batgirl, or would that be too obvious?)

Kent Silveira
1150 Ranchero Way #75
San Jose, CA 95117

*****

Dear Robert,

One of the things that makes John Ostrander such a good writer is that he's not afraid to change things. His books and characters are always moving forward. Look at recent changes in FIRESTORM and *Grimjack*. The same can be said of Rick Flag's death in SUICIDE SQUAD. Rick Flag was the connecting factor between the old Squad and the new version. He was the team leader and in many ways the center of the book. Recent events, however, put Flag outside the Squad. He was no longer the leader, no longer the center. The Jihad became early adversaries of the Squad. They've been back since then, and presented a seemingly perennial threat to the Squad. In one fell swoop, John eliminated both from the book. Rick Flag is dead, and the Jihad, even though such a large organization may be able to re-establish itself, is done. The book can continue in other areas—other characters, other threats, other themes. Even if the Jihad again poses a threat, it's only natural to expect that it will take them some time to regroup. John's writing has a natural flow to it. The actions of one issue are dependent on the actions of all the previous issues. The characters act and react as they would be expected to. The surprises are there, but not in the form of last-second stop of the bomb. The surprises naturally arise from the situations the characters are in. Keep up the good work, guys.

Floyd D. Barber
15 Spruce Lane
West Nyack, NY 10994

*****

Dear Mr. Ostrander,

Overall the story in issue #26 was excellent. I could spend hours telling you what I loved about this book, but I'll keep my comments on the latter half.

I don't know whether it was the story by itself or the highlight (or low-light) of an extremely bad week, but at the end of this story I broke down and cried. I'm not the kind of person who cries about anything. On those very rare occasions that I do cry, no one can get me to admit it. Afterward, I felt much better about the week's events and I wanted to thank you for such an incredible story.

At the beginning of the run of SUICIDE SQUAD I had no love at all for Rick Flag Jr., but after the events of issues #22 and #26 I have come to the opinion that he is truly one of America's greatest heroes. But in so being he is still human and makes mistakes. Proof of this is in that letter he sent Eve Eden. Although he said it was not his intent, he made the same error his father made and passed on his sense of guilt to someone else. I would like to see how she deals with it, but not here in these pages. Flag was right about one thing: Eve does not belong with the Squad anymore.

In his letter Rick made reference to his father's team, the original Suicide Squadron. I am not familiar with the history of the Squad. Did the men referred to exist before this story or were they created here? Either way, I, for one, would like to see the history of these men developed further.

Back to Nightshade: I wrote earlier that I wanted her to leave the team and become a member of Captain Atom's cast. That would be a mistake; John Ostrander is the only writer who can do her justice. I have heard rumors of bringing back ADVENTURE COMICS. If this is true, I think she should be considered for one of the slots there. If these rumors aren't true and someone was pulling my chain, all I've got to say is, "Why the hell isn't it; it's a damn good idea!" I want to see her deal with the pressure that Flag unwittingly and unintentionally put on her. A solo feature would be the best place for that.

J. Holl
1020 Echo Trail
Watkinsville, GA 30677

When we started up this version of the Squad, John got the idea to link it to all previous incarnations. Back during "The War That Time Forgot"'s run in STAR-SPANGLED WAR STORIES, a number of stories featured a Suicide Squadron. None of the characters were recurring but John changed all that in SECRET ORIGINS #14 and here. Rick Flag Sr. was created to provide that link.

There are no plans whatsoever for an ADVENTURE COMICS at present, since everyone around here is far too busy to produce another anthology. Kim Yale, however, has been hard at work on her NIGHTSHADE proposal and if it's accepted you'll read about it here first!

*****

Dear Editor,

Wow.

That's all. Just wow.

The last 11 pages took so much out of me, I'm not even going to try to comment on the first half of the book. Talk about a dramatic ending. But I guess it's all our fault. We've been

clamoring for the book to live up to its title. When I saw the ads with the new members for next year, I thought that present members who were not pictured were just going to quit or be paroled.

Silly, naive me.

Wow.

This story had such an impact, please leave them all dead. I don't think it would be right to bring back Rustam or, for that matter, the Jihad, from the dead by saying that they teleported away at the last minute, because, for me, that would be like spitting on Rick Flag's grave and cheapen his sacrifice at the same time.

I know the Jihad is a fantastic villain group. But you told a great story, and you should stick to your guns. Show respect for Flag. If the Jihad is somehow resurrected, Flag's death doesn't mean a thing. That's why I no longer buy any back issues of older DC comics. As a result of the Crisis, those stories were negated. So if those stories never really happened, I figured there's no sense in buying them. And, if the Jihad does somehow survive, I don't know which would insult me more: having Flag stay dead, or having him survive the atomic bomb blast as well.

Kevin Cunningham
15040-A Downing Oak Court
Los Gatos, CA 95032

Not every comic pre-1985 was negated by the Crisis. In fact, the vast majority of them (with the possible exception of the Superman family of titles) are still valid. And don't let that continuity fact spoil your enjoyment of a simpler, more innocent age. And trust us, the Jihad is gone and Flag is very much a handful of charred atoms.

*****

Dear Bob,

SUICIDE SQUAD #26 truly closed the first phase of the Squad, as the transition is complete. Through John Ostrander's tight script, I felt a twinge of sorrow and regret, as the cast moves forward with their lives as the past is buried behind them.

Rick Flag's journey to Jotenheim was indeed suicidal, and exemplifies the type of missions the team should be undertaking. This is supposed to be a *suicide* squad, a team whose members are expendable. Given this option, shouldn't the government send them on impossible assignments where loss of life is the means to an end? Colonel Flag understood this, and sacrificed himself as a symbol of his commitment to the ideal.

I hope after *The Janus Directive*, the various government-sponsored agencies' agendas will be explained. As I see it, Checkmate is the espionage agency, Peacemaker is used for terrorists, Force of July and the Atom Project are more high-profile groups, while the Suicide Squad is the team to send as a last resort to kill or be killed. I anticipate this aspect to be played up in the months to come.

Although we all like the status quo, it is good to see change, as change brings growth. The Suicide Squad will be stronger through the alterations taking place.

Mark Lucas
66 Cleary Court #902
San Francisco, CA 94109

*****

Dear Mr. Greenberger,

SUICIDE SQUAD #26 exceeded its usual all-around high quality. From start to finish it was one of the best issues yet, and from the looks of things it's only going to get better.

Beginning with the art—Grant Miehm's art looked as though he'd been drawing the Squad from the start. I hope John K. Snyder III will keep up the excellent art this book has enjoyed.

On to the story ... what can I say? John Ostrander is one of the premier writers in comicdom. My head was spinning from all the subplots. Amanda Waller being held at gunpoint by Amanda Waller? Is Oracle really Batgirl? She could use a device like Ravan's to help her walk, and she'd make a great addition to the team. Pies, pies, and more pies—where will it end?

Rick Flag's letter was quite touching. He seemed likeable for once, and his death severed all ties with the previous Squad. I will miss the Jihad since they were perfect adversaries for our beloved Squad.

One last thing: when are we going to wrap up the Duchess/Lashina storyline? It's running on for two years now.

Lee Clouse
2833 Weldon Loop
Upton, KY 42784

*****

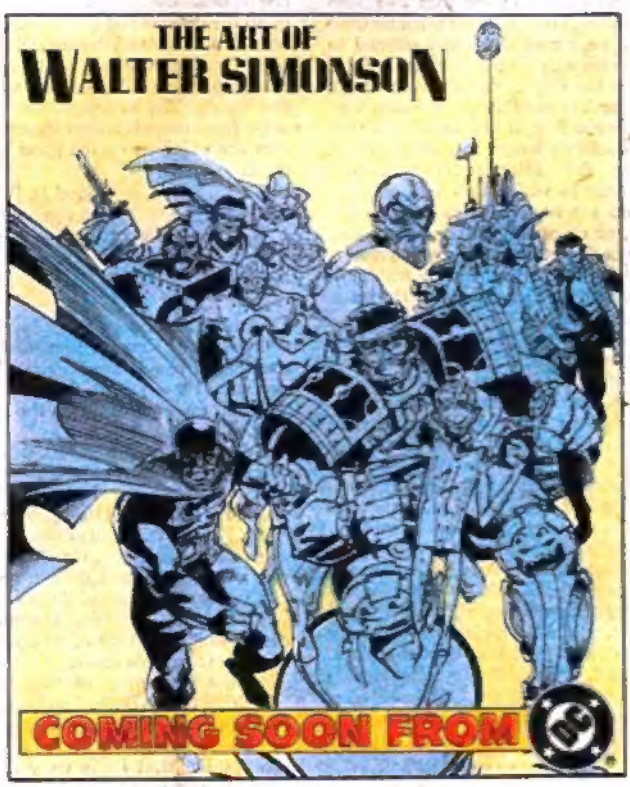
Now, there's a segue...

COMING ATTRACTIONS

At the end of this issue we see that Duchess has finally made her move. She's abducted Big Barda and is obviously ready to return home ... to Apokolips. Well, she's not going alone. Nope, instead, she's bringing along a hand-picked team and we begin a three-parter that will certainly permanently affect the line-up and the lives of some of the members. And if that's not enough, we give in to your demands and add a brand-new member: Poison Ivy! As you can tell, next month is not the month to miss an issue of the SQUAD.

Meantime, a big round of thanks to Grant Miehm for stepping in and helping John K. catch his breath after the last few months. Grant's work now graces MANHUNTER every month and it's well worth a look, especially with issue #17 guest-starring Batman.

Dan Raspler, SUICIDE SQUAD's new editor, recommends you take a look at another book he's editing—FIRESTORM. It's another Ostrander title that has plenty of changes happening including the formation of a new threat: the Captains of Industry. Take a look.

Until next month, keep smiling!

—Bob Greenberger